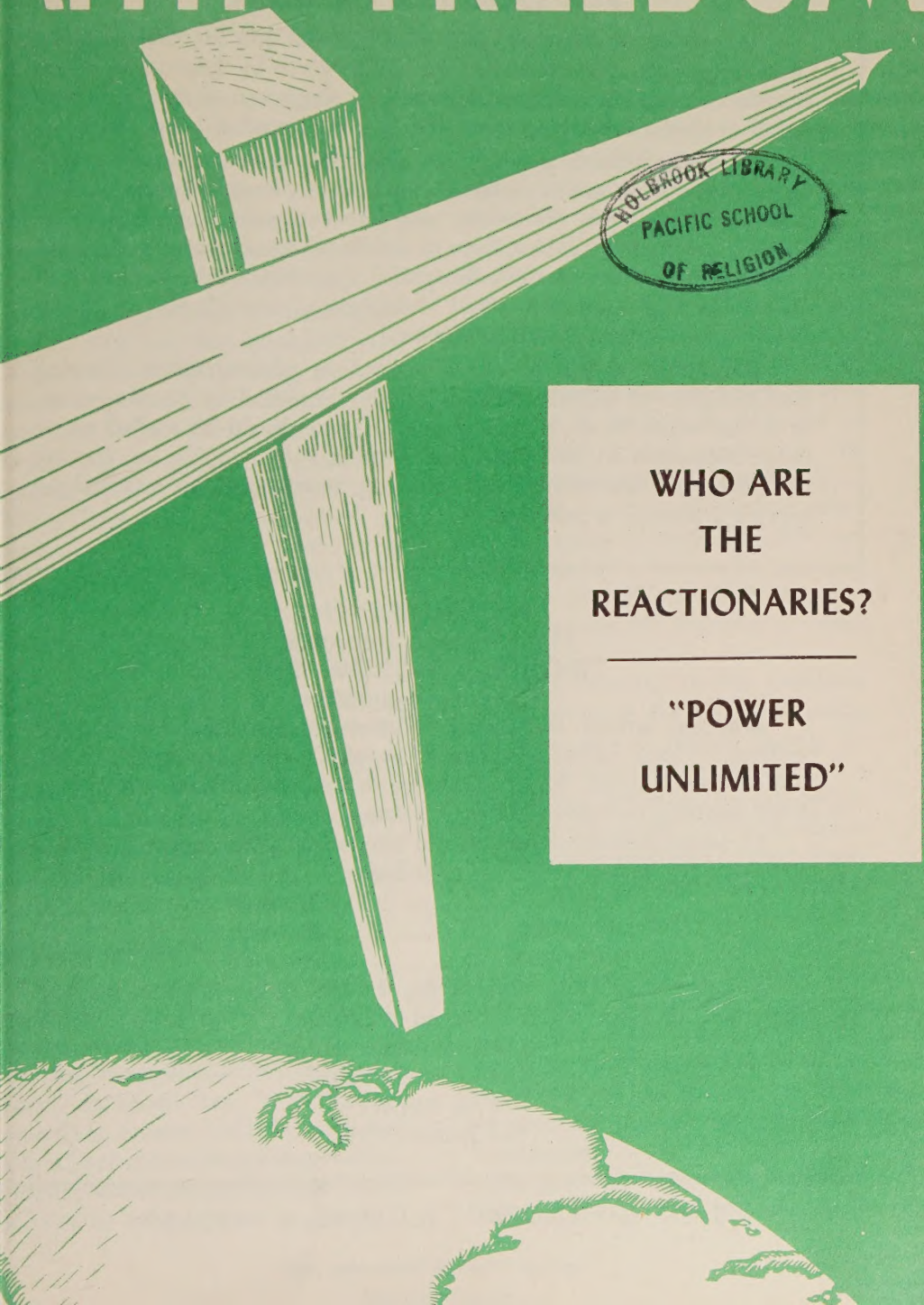
9:5

ew Perspectives in

AITH AND FREEDOM



HOLBROOK LIBRARY
PACIFIC SCHOOL
OF RELIGION

WHO ARE THE REACTIONARIES?

"POWER UNLIMITED"

The Second Sermon Awards Program

on the general theme

CHRISTIAN EVALUATIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PROBLEMS OF WORK

Six awards of $50 each, plus an additional $50 for each winning piece we publish in whole or in part, will be given by Spiritual Mobilization for outstanding addresses delivered by clergymen of any faith from pulpit or platform between September 1 and November 1 (inclusive).

The general theme may include, separately or in combination, such topics as the labor union problem, employer-employee relations, finding meaning in one's job, the worker and free enterprise, a philosophy of work. Sermons need not conform to details of our editorial policy, but must represent a constructive, thoughtful approach within the intent of "The Liberating Spirit of Spiritual Mobilization," recently sent to all our readers. (Additional copies on request.)

Manuscripts should be typed, printed, or mimeographed, showing date and place of delivery. Entries may be submitted by the clergyman, or in his behalf by an interested layman, and should be mailed on or before November 20, 1959, to Sermon Awards, P. O. Box 877, San Jacinto, California. All manuscripts not receiving awards will be returned on request if postage is provided.

ANNOUNCING
The New and Improved
"WORDS TO GROW ON"
Calendar for 1960

Arranged around the theme, "Vision for America," the selected readings for each month represent a "chapter" in developing the theme in a coherent pattern. Exact references to sources will add still further to the inspiring usefulness of the next calendar.

To assure delivery, orders should be placed by November 1, 1959 – the earlier the better. Prices are as follows:

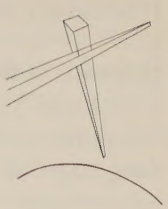
1 to 100.....50c each
100 to 500.....42c each
500 to 1000.....39c each

All prices are F.O.B., Minneapolis, and include envelope for mailing. Quotations for larger orders furnished on request.

For further details write
Spiritual Mobilization
P.O. Box 877
San Jacinto, Calif.

Copyright © Spiritual Mobilization, 1959.
All Rights Reserved.

Who Are The Reactionaries?



AN EDITORIAL PREVIEW

The narrative-essay, the letter, and the brief review appearing on subsequent pages may evoke two kinds of response: a sentimental and nostalgic sigh for things that appear to be forever gone, or a cynical snort that they are "hopelessly reactionary."

Actually, the writers are thoroughly modern men, one self-employed as a Counselor on Profit Sharing, the second an employer in a modern, enlightened firm, and the third a theologically progressive clergyman. The associations of all three have sometimes been "liberal," yet each is "conservative" by persuasion, in sympathy with those who call themselves "libertarian."

Saying this much by way of introduction, we have invoked four words that are used to distinguish varying bands in the spectrum of social thinking. All the words are frequently abused, sometimes into meaningless ambiguity; all are capable of being directed as slurs against enemies, and three of them as accolades for friends. But the one name that is dreaded above every name is "reactionary."

Meaning of the Word

In other associations, "reaction" means simply a response, a transformation or change, a recoil from an extreme. Even in politics it originally meant no more than "a movement towards a former political or social policy," without necessary opprobrium.

Today it has become a smear-word, as dirty in its overtones as "fascist," gaining its currency from communists who tied its meaning to oppressive Czarism, hateful Nazism, and by artful extension, to "exploitive capitalism."

It is no longer a sneer and smear on the lips of communists alone. While occasionally used by conservatives and libertarians, it has come into most common use by those calling themselves "liberals." It is applied to anyone who is supposedly opposed to progress, to almost anyone on the "right" as distinguished from the "left," especially to advocates of free enterprise, limited government, and curtailed unionism. And so, for instance, Spiritual Mobilization has been recently accused of "reactionary indoctrination."

Sartell Prentice, in his evocative article, recounts the condition under which a newly arrived family in America worked and prospered half a century ago, and pointedly and poignantly compares that former condition with what he regards as a vastly deteriorated state of things today. Similar sentiments are expressed in the letter to "Mary Lou," and in Mr. Sollitt's review. Presumably these men want to "go back" to something that may never again exist. And in preferring the larger freedom and personal responsibility of an earlier era, they become, by the liberal's standard, "reactionary."

But just who and what is a "reactionary"? How is he to be recognized?

The answer requires some perspective.

Liberals and Conservatives

"Liberal" and "conservative" are honorable words, and ideally they belong together. A hyphenated "liberal-conservative" is not a contradiction. For a liberal of balanced judgment is perfectly willing, and even insistent, that the best of the past be conserved; and an equally sane conservative is the first to acknowledge that what is evil in the past be discarded and the good improved upon.

There are those who suggest that conservatives are adherents to principle, and liberals, to progress, often at the expense of principle. But this is an over-simplification. Both may be men of principle and believers in progress. This is the full meaning of the word, "libertarian," which seeks to avoid the narrower associations and combine the virtues of both the liberals and the conservatives.

The conflict arises over the question of *which* principles and the *criteria* of progress! In spirit and often in vocabulary, they may be brothers; in application to specific issues they part company. It is at this parting that each begins to harden into dogmatism and hurl invectives at the other. Both speak of "the glory of freedom," but one speaks of preserving it, believing it is being lost, and the other speaks of enlarging it, believing that older forms were not really freedom at all.

It is not enough to speak the reconciling word that there is error and truth on both sides. In the intensity of the modern controversy the issues are too sharp and crucial to be blurred by "a middle way." Considering the features of the "welfare state" with which liberals are identified, and that conservatives stand in polar opposition to virtually all such "liberal" programs, any compromise can but be a betrayal of what each regards as right and desirable. Hence the conservative's inclination to believe that the liberal is a "tool of the communists," and the liberal's insistence that the conservative is "reactionary."

In the face of such polar extremes it must be that one side is more nearly right than the other, and somewhere criteria of judgment must be found. It is submitted here that one such criterion is forthcoming by asking, "*Who* are the reactionaries?"

If "reactionary" means looking backward for a condition which is to be preferred, then conservatives, in desiring to restore an earlier condition in America, are, indeed, "reactionary." They "react" *against* what they regard as socialist-statist trends in the modern world, and would have us "react" *to* a condition of things such as that nostalgically recalled by our three writers.

The Conflict Fundamental

But if we agree that being "reactionary" means wanting to go back, at least in principle, to an earlier state of things, where do the "liberals" stand? They profess to be as much on the side of freedom as any conservative, and they are doubtless sincere. In the realms of free speech, free press, and free worship they are as thoroughgoing sons of liberty as anyone, no better and no worse than conservatives.

Yet there is a fundamental difference that sets them clearly apart. If we are to judge by his fruits, the present-day "liberal" is committed to using the power of the state to accomplish what he regards as socially desirable ends. Once the liberal was

relatively an optimist, believing that within the limits of Constitutional law and balanced power human nature could be trusted to act responsibly for the good of the social whole. This was the classical Liberalism of Jefferson and the Founding Fathers. Today, despite his lip-service to the dignity of man, the liberal has many of the appearances of a pessimist, cynically disillusioned with freedom, believing that only the enlarging role of government can create a "responsible society."

The Real Reactionaries

That very phrase is significant: the "responsible society" imposes responsibility upon individuals who otherwise are presumed to be irresponsible. Therefore, in the name of a "responsible" social whole the individual must be collectivised and become increasingly subordinate to the state until, in the political philosophy of a "liberal" spokesman such as Adlai Stevenson, what we should have is a government "big enough" to meet all responsibilities!

But it is precisely in resorting to the power of government that the "liberal" becomes the real "reactionary." Reposing more and more authority in an omni-competent state to solve our problems, regulate the economy, dispense favors, and achieve what the government decrees is "good for the people," is the oldest technique in civilized history.

It is freedom for individuals to direct their own destinies, especially their economic destinies, that is the really new thing under the sun!

Witness the comment of one discerning student of freedom: "Do you realize that in all this world's history only three per cent of the world's people have really been free – free in the sense that we Americans have known freedom – and that most of that three per cent have *been* Americans?" Against some 4000 years of the rule of governments, the American experiment in self-government is the most modern and exciting innovation ever known to mankind!

Today's Liberal,
Yesterday's Conservative

No one discerned this more clearly than that foremost architect of libertarian philosophy, Frederic Bastiat, whose very time of writing his masterly essay, *The Law,* is significant.* Expressing in 1850 a philosophy of liberty now regarded by latter-day "liberals" as "reactionary," he noted what for his time was the "classical" or reactionary doctrine.**

What was this "classical" doctrine against which Bastiat protested? It was simply the use of the power of the state, reposed usually in the hands of a monarch, for legal plunder. Said Bastiat in defining his terms: "When a portion of wealth is transferred from the person who owns it – without his consent and without compensation, and whether by force or by fraud – to anyone who does not own it, then I say that property is violated, that an act of plunder is committed."

This plunder tends to be concealed when it is generalized or legalized, yet

*Translated from the French by Dean Russell, Foundation for Economic Education, Irvington-on-Hudson, New York, 1959, 75 pp., price 65 cents.

**Note also Ludwig von Mises' famous study, *Socialism,* New Edition, Yale University Press, 1951, p. 540: "In the Victorian age, when John Stuart Mill wrote his essay *On Liberty,* such views as those held by [present-day socialists] were called reactionary. Today they are called 'progressive' and 'liberal'."

legal plunder can be readily identified: "See if the law takes from some persons what belongs to them, and gives it to other persons to whom it does not belong. See if the law benefits one citizen at the expense of another by doing what the citizen himself cannot do without committing a crime."

The Pattern of Plunder

Such was the pattern of plunder when under the monarchs the few were able by governmental favor to get rich at the expense of the many. It was against this, incidentally, that the legendary Robin Hood was the symbol of revolt. Robin Hood's deadliest enemy, the Sheriff of Nottingham, represented government, as did all the members of the ruling class, the nobility. In "robbing the rich to feed the poor," Robin was not attacking the producers of wealth – in his day, the farmers, the freemen, and the yeomen – but the parasites and predators, full-panoplied in the trappings of governmental privilege.

Classical scholars, such as Bossuet at the Court of Louis XIV, and Archbishop Fenelon, instructor to the Duke of Burgundy, were expert in rationalizing governmental privilege and power. Doubtless they were sincere, for they were following in an archaic tradition to which, in their time, there was little alternative.

But aside from extolling the virtues and prerogatives of ruling princes and kings, conventional classical thought everywhere declared that "behind passive society there is a concealed power called *law* or *legislator* (or called by some other terminology that designates some unnamed person or persons of undisputed influence and authority) which moves, controls, benefits, and improves mankind." It assumed, moreover, a virtue on the part of the ruling powers that did not exist among the generality of mankind, hence the necessity of strong, benevolent centralization of government for the "benefit" of the governed.

Old Pattern, New Weaver

How does this differ from the essentials of today's "liberalism"? Examine it as we will, there is no difference in principle; the sole difference is in the balances of power. The present-day plunderers are still engaged in taking from the more productive for the benefit of the less productive, but the numbers have shifted. Once the beneficiaries at the governmental taxtrough were the few; today, they are the many – any segment of society with enough votes to command favoring legislation!

The fattening of the former barons of privilege at the expense of the producing taxpayers is rightfully regarded by liberals and conservatives alike as plunder.

But today the plunder is disguised under such labels as "the graduated income tax," "public power," "social security," "farm subsidies," "unemployment insurance," and "collective bargaining." It is sanctified because the beneficiaries are no longer princes and nobility but "the people." By a devious and dubious shift of morality, plunder has been given a halo by becoming the mores of a majority!

It may be that we have gone too far toward the point of no-return to restore the principle of individual freedom and responsibility which made this nation rich and strong, and gave little people like Mr. Prentice's "American Family" a chance to enjoy the fruits of their own labor. We are so

immunized by modern "liberal" thought, believing that "justice" and "benevolence" consist in taxing one group of citizens for the benefit of another, that it is probably useless to argue otherwise. Every "liberal" will heatedly contend that anyone who urges a return to the freedom principles of an era prior to the "progressive reforms" of today is a "reactionary."

Old Principle, New Application

But at least we can recognize who the real reactionaries are. If conservatives would have us go back to principles regnant in the 19th century, the so-called "liberals" would take us back to principles of all the earlier centuries, when every man was subject to the state, paying tax-tribute for the benefit of those who enjoyed governmental favor! If the conservatives would have us restore the kind of freedom for which the American Revolution was accomplished, the liberals would have us restore the much older idea, by which we may be "liberated" from freedom under supposedly benevolent Government!

Yet beyond both conservative and liberal stands the libertarian. The libertarian fully realizes that 1960 is not 1860 or 1776. In the conservative spirit he calls for restoration of the freedom *principle* as conceived and secured in the Constitution against the archaic principle of governmental tyranny and dependancy. But in the liberal spirit of progress he urges also that upon this *principle* we build toward that refinement and enlargement of individual responsibility under God and within voluntary community which alone can make freedom work.

An American Family Is Born

BY SARTELL PRENTICE, JR.

Somewhat in the spirit of articles which appeared often in FAITH and FREEDOM under a former editor, the following narrative-essay introduces a new personality to our pages. Mr. Prentice, a Christian layman and a clergyman's son, is an economist who currently serves as a professional Counselor on Profit Sharing, with offices at Dobbs Ferry, New York. A student of freedom in both its economic and moral dimensions, he speaks extensively throughout the country before church, college, civic, and business audiences. Surmising a mixed response to this and the two following articles, the editor has been moved to write the preceding commentary, entitled "Who Are The Reactionaries?"

Yes, the shop was still there; and on the window I could see the same old familiar sign, written there so many years ago:

R. LOGIODICE, SHOE REPAIRING

We had just gone out for a short drive, over the Throughway Bridge across the Hudson River to Nyack, and, as we drove up Broadway approaching the business section, I had wondered if this little shop had sur-

vived all the changes wrought in the course of the past sixty tumultuous years.

Memories of little events of long ago flooded into my mind, of the years soon after the turn of the century when I was growing up in this quiet little Hudson River village – one of the "Domini's" sons; my father was minister of the Reformed Church.

Mr. Logiodice's shop was just a block from our home, and almost every day I had occasion to walk past it. Looking in, I could see Mr. Logiodice, with his shoemaker's apron on, working at his trade. From early morning until late at night, there he was.

I do not know when he first came over to this country; I do know he came alone, leaving his wife and children – two boys and two girls – in the old country, somewhere near Naples. I believe he came here about the turn of the century.

All Are Alone

Life is a very individual and personal matter. We are born alone, as individuals, and we die alone, as individuals. Only the individual can feel pain, or joy, or love, or sorrow; no one else can think my thoughts, nor can I think for any one else.

Mr. Logiodice alone knew the loneliness and the heartaches of those first difficult years, when he was separated by thousands of miles from his loved ones in far-away Naples, living alone in a strange land where his own beautiful language was a foreign tongue.

Mr. Logiodice alone dreamed the great dreams that made it all worthwhile; yet, as individuals, millions of others before and since have dreamt the same dream – and have felt the same irresistible urge to make that dream a reality, regardless of the cost.

To realize his dream, Mr. Logiodice worked hard and long hours, and lived very frugally. Little by little, as he put his money aside and watched his savings grow, he must have counted, first the years, then the months, and, finally, the days until he could see his dream blossom into reality.

Some years went by; then, one day, as I passed his shop, I noticed that his dream had begun to bear fruit. His eldest son was with him.

Working together now, sharing the same dream, despite the hard work and the long hours, the burden must now have seemed much lighter. Time passed more quickly; and, with father and son both working, it was not long before; and it was not long before the were here, and the family reunited at long last.

A new American family was "born."

With all of them working, the men in the shop and mother and the girls taking good care of the "men," the family savings grew faster than ever before! and it was not long before the family was able to build a nice home near the shop.

This was the American Dream – and how one family made it come true.

The Difference, Then and Now

There was no unemployment compensation, no so-called "social security," no public housing, slum clearance, or rent control, no minimum wage laws; there was little Government interference in the market place. Taxes were light – and the American people had an unalienable right to the fruits of their labor – and they had the sense of personal responsibility, of personal obligation to provide for themselves and their families.

They had "freedom to," instead of

the negative "freedom from" – that is, the negative freedom from the vicissitudes of life.

And it was to realize this concept of freedom – positive and indivisible freedom – that millions upon millions of individuals like Mr. Logiodice flocked to America from all over the world, fleeing from the tyrannical consequences that inevitably flow from every attempt to implement the false concept of liberty as meaning "freedom from"; for this negative concept of freedom is best realized in prison.

I wonder, would it be possible for Mr. Logiodice to realize today, in 1959, the dream he brought to fruition in the early years of the century?

All the money earned in the long hours he put in, and through the hard work he did, from the first of January to the end of April, each year, would have to be used to pay his taxes; and, with the graduated personal income tax, the more he made, the greater the tax burden that would be imposed. Even the money he saved would be subjected to the corroding effects of inflation, which since 1945 have reduced the purchasing power of the dollar by 37 per cent.

More Earnings, Less Money

The National Industrial Conference Board has just released some figures which bring into sharp focus the effect on the American worker of twenty years of increased taxation and continued inflation:

A skilled worker, in 1959, requires a before-tax income of $7,000 in order to live as well as he lived in 1939 on a before-tax income of $3,000; it requires a before-tax income of $12,000 today to match a 1939 income of $5,000; and an executive, in 1959, would have to have a before-tax income of $75,000 in order to have the purchasing power of a 1939 income of $25,000.

One may well ask, therefore, whether today Mr. Logiodice would be able to save the money to send for his family, and then to build a home, as he did in the early years of the twentieth century.

Perhaps more important, would Mr. Logiodice, today, want to make the necessary sacrifices, even if, today, it should be possible for him to achieve the realization of his dream?

Is the American Dream now but a phantom shadow of what it once was – the gigantic, irresistible motive force that built this great country?

Mr. Logiodice came here seeking freedom, not only for himself, but especially for his sons and daughters and for their unborn children and for all the following generations.

Pure "Security"

A few miles farther up the Hudson, across the river, in plain view from Nyack, rise the grim walls of Sing Sing prison. Here there is no individual responsibility; here there is no personal freedom. Here, at Sing Sing, there is, however, absolute negative freedom – perfect "freedom from" Want, from Fear, from Personal Responsibility.

Is this the kind of Freedom our forefathers died to bequeath to us and to our children? Is this the kind of freedom for which Mr. and Mrs. Logiodice sacrificed so much to bequeath to their children?

Is this the kind of freedom we mean when we sing "Sweet Land of Liberty," or when we sing "Oh, say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave, O'er the Land of the Free, And the Home of the Brave"?

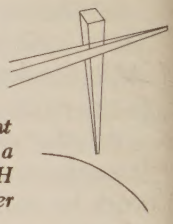
Mother and Father Logiodice passed away some years ago, leaving behind, today, thirty-three descendants who look to them as all Americans revere their courageous ancestors who left all behind to establish a new home in this great new land across the seas.

Father Logiodice is no longer here; nevertheless, I wish we could all talk to him. It might break our hearts to hear him tell of his shattered dreams.

It might also shake us out of our apathy and indifferençe!

It might even give us the courage to demand that Government restore to us our lost freedom – and the courage and the will to assume for ourselves the individual and the personal responsibilities which, little by little, and one by one, we have allowed Government to assume for us; for which we have paid, for which we are continuing to pay, in the coinage of our once-proud Heritage of Liberty.

Dear Mary Lou



This is a letter to a young girl, yet it is much more than that. It was sent by and to persons who must remain anonymous – except that the writer is a Midwest employer who in his sensitivity and concern is a close friend of FAITH and FREEDOM. The recipient was orphaned by the loss, first of her mother and then her father, within a single year.

The letter expresses a concept of the dignity of work. The young girl's father was a welder who in vigorous middle life died of a heart attack – or perhaps a broken heart? For, in other words of the same employer-friend, "In these days of growing apathy and lethargy, there ARE men who care. Their lives – and their deaths – must be symbols for us to have the courage to accept our responsibilities."

I came to the funeral parlor today so that I could see you. I wanted to see you so that I could write this letter to you knowing just what you looked like. You are a pretty girl, fair in color, tall and straight — just about the looks and age of the older of my own two girls. Now that I can picture you in my mind, it is easier to say to you the things I have in my heart.

First, let me say that your mother and father can be very proud of you. Few people have ever borne so bravely the burden of sorrow that has descended upon your young heart twice in such a short span of time.

Abraham Lincoln wrote a little girl named Fanny McCullough a letter when he was President of the United States in 1862. The things he said to her can also be said to you:

"In this sad world of ours sorrow comes to all, and to the young it comes with bitterer agony because it takes them unawares. The older have learned ever to expect it. I am anxious to afford some alleviation to your present distress.

"Perfect relief is not possible, except with time. You cannot now realize that you will ever feel better. Is this not so? And yet it is a mistake. You are sure to be happy again. To know this, which is certainly true, will make you some less miserable now. I have had

experience enough to know what I say, and you need only to believe it to feel better at once. The memory of your dear father, instead of an agony, will yet be a sad, sweet feeling in your heart of a purer and holier sort than you have ever known before."

Perhaps I can help you reach this better feeling in your heart Mr. Lincoln speaks of by telling you some things about your father:

You must be very, very proud of your father. I have known and worked with your father for seven or eight years. The company he worked for has done a lot of work for the company I work for. My job was to think of the way whole plants should be built. Your father was one of the men who actually built the plants. He made our dreams become real.

Your father was one of the most successful men I have ever known. And I have been fortunate enough to know many men whom the world has called successful — even including two of the last four Presidents of the United States.

You see, Mary Lou, to me a successful person is a person who does his work well — whatever his work may be — in the sense that all work is a bringing of the ideal from potentiality into actuality. (Do not worry if you do not understand these words yet. Most people today will never understand them, but you will because your father lived them.)

There were days many years ago when behind each work there stood some idea of its perfect execution. A man worked to see this ideal come into being. A man had pride in his work. He worked as he prayed — towards the goal of perfection. Such a man did not hurry, he did not take the easy way, because shoddy work was a reproach to his character.

Your father was such a man. He had character and integrity. And he had the courage to accept the responsibility for more than his rightful share of the work. There are not very many men left like him. He was more than a welder. He was an artist with an electric welding machine. He could take one of the hardest of Nature's materials — steel — and one of the most powerful of Nature's energies — electricity — and by knowing and respecting Nature's laws, make them into piping and pumping systems that approached our dreams of the Perfect.

I am very glad I had the chance to work with your father. I learned much by watching him work.

Someday, when you have had a chance to think about the things I have tried to say here, perhaps you could let me take you out to our plant. I would like to show you some of the wonderful things your father did.

When you want to, whether it is now or years from now, please write to me. Let me know how to reach you. I shall call you and, if you would let me, I would like to bring along my girls and little boy. I would like them also to see how all men benefit from the work of one who was a successful man.

They Signed For Us

A REVIEW OF THE BOOK

By the Rev. Kenneth W. Sollitt

In an America that appears to have lost its taste for true freedom and become drunk on the heady wine of security, *They Signed for Us,* by Merle Sinclair and Annabel Douglas McArthur (Duell, Sloan and Pearce, Inc., N.Y.C., 1957) is a harbinger of hope. It provides a corrective emphasis long absent since historians like Charles A. Beard and J. Allen Smith debunked the Founders of America as mere pursuers of self-interest.

This little book of only eighty pages recounts the known facts about the fifty-six patriots who risked their lives and fortunes to sign the Declaration of Independence. It tells who they were, how well they understood the audacity of their act, and what happened to them when they dared defy tyranny.

"Admitting the probable calculations to be against" them, Richard Henry Lee drew up the original resolution.

Colonel John Nixon echoed the resounding tones of the Liberty Bell with the words, " . . . we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." The lives of some and the fortunes of most of these men were forfeited, and if such forfeiture may be the measure of character, they were not merely putting out words for public consumption in speaking of "sacred honor"!

John Hancock wrote his name large and said, "There! John Bull can read my name without his spectacles, and may now double his reward . . . for my head."

Charles Carrol, one of the richest men in America, signed "most willingly," and, as he did so, one of the delegates said prophetically, "There go a few millions!"

As the British swarmed over Long Island they burned and plundered the home of signer Francis Lewis and carried off his wife as a prisoner.

Tories despoiled William Floyd's extensive woodlands until there was nothing left but "the naked soil."

All the business interests of Philip Livingston fell to the enemy. His country estate became a British naval hospital, and Livingston sold the remainder of his property to help maintain the country's credit.

Hessian soldiers descended upon the property of signer John Hart while his wife lay on her deathbed. Both he and his wife died of the hardships endured.

Richard Stockton, who had pledged his fortune and his life to his country, was so destitute after the war that he had to accept charity.

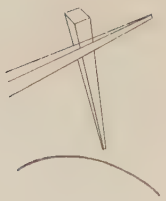
Robert Morris lost about 150 of his own ships during the war, most of them uninsured; yet through some genius of management was always able to meet General Washington's urgent appeals for funds.

And so goes the inspiring story of those who "signed for us," a people who are spurning the liberty they sacrificed to give us and espousing the "security" they disdained to embrace for themselves.

"Power Unlimited"

AN EDITORIAL BOOK REVIEW

By Edward W. Greenfield



Our critics, both friendly and unfriendly, continue to wonder why so much attention to organized labor. Say the friendly: "Why not at least a balance between labor and management? And don't forget the 101 other problems with which Spiritual Mobilization should be concerned!"

Say the unfriendly: "Come off it! Business is an equal or worse offender!" And one rival journal, because of our stand on organized labor, accuses us, among other things, of "reactionary indoctrination!"

Now a persuasive and significant answer has been provided in a new book, *Power Unlimited — The Corruption of Union Leadership* (305 pp., Ronald Press, New York) by a man we are proud to acknowledge as a respected friend, Professor Sylvester Petro of New York University. More will be said of him and his book presently, but let me ready the road by submitting a perspective.

Why the Imbalance?

To begin, we *are* moving toward a balance, and have by no means been exclusively concerned with labor unions. In his first issue of *Faith and Freedom* the present editor declared that the apparent imbalance is deliberate but, we hope, temporary. It is the burning issue of this time, this year, this critical moment in our nation's history. The resolution of the labor union problem will materially affect the other searing questions of war and peace, the threat of Communism, the role of government, the survival of free society, the viability of our faith and morals.

The book takes off with a prefatory statement that supports the emphasis we feel is so important:

> "America is in danger — not so much from without as from within. The threat from Soviet Russia, serious as it is, need not panic us so long as our free institutions survive, for the freedom which has made us strong will, if preserved, make us stronger still. Our danger lies basically in the abandonment of our main strength — the principle of freedom under law. More immediately it lies in the excessive power and special privileges of the big unions. Exploiting those privileges to form socially abusive industry-wide monopolies which they incorrectly call trade unions, the union leaders have brought about *a state of affairs so menacing as to demand the immediate attention of all citizens and their representatives in Congress.*" (Emphasis added)

And far along toward the end, after marshalling an irresistable avalanche of evidence, the book draws a summary conclusion as follows:

> "The truth about the big industry-wide trade unions is that they threaten the health, the well-being, and the survival of American society to a degree never before approached by either internal or external enemies. They are spreading corruption of every kind and at every level: corruption of truth and

of ideas; moral corruption; corruption of business; and corruption of government. Freedom is the victim, freedom as an idea and freedom as a way of life. . . .

"The problem is now, I believe, in perfect focus. Freedom, the supreme value of Western civilization, is the supreme target of the trade-union attack. The question is whether America is willing to fight in defense of freedom." (p. 270)

Yielding a Point

Before an incredulous reader scoffs or explodes, let me yield a point. Time and again we have agreed that business and businessmen have their faults, and we make no apology for them. Nor do we overlook the unlovely picture from the past that has created the popular image of business as exploitive and cruel. Recently I was sent, anonymously, an Orville Prescott review from the April 27 *New York Times* of *The Rape of the Fair Country,* by Alexander Cordell, an historical novel about the impact of the Industrial Revolution on rural Wales. Says Mr. Prescott in describing the story:

"Children seven or eight years old went to work in the mines. Women and girls towed trams loaded with ore underground. Crippled, maimed, and blinded men were everywhere, the survivors of the accidents that had killed their comrades. Molten iron splashed over the faces of the workers. Trams cut off their feet. Glare from the furnaces blinded them. Wages were pitiful. Men were suspended or blacklisted as a discipline. Food could be bought only in company stores at high prices. Children and adults died of starvation. And so the first unions came. . . . "

Hold that picture for a while. No one can blink the conditions which a century, or even half a century, ago roused the sympathies of the morally sensitive and gave support to the labor union movement. Time and again we hear it said in extenuation of present-day unionism: "Before you criticize, remember what brought the unions into being!"*

A Better Perspective

And so we remember. But we remember also something else that is too easily forgotten by union apologists. Fifty to a hundred years ago — as the rash of television "Westerns" should amply remind us — life was rough and raw for almost everyone. There was no plumbing, no central heating, no mechanical refrigeration, no refined gadgetry in even the richest of homes; no mechanical reapers, no binders, no motor-driven tractors, no telephone or television communication on even the most prosperous of farms; no foolproof machinery, no air conditioning, no sanitary wash-rooms, no elaborate safety and labor-saving devices in even the most enlightened of factories. Such things did not exist.

*For a truer perspective on conditions which presumably stemmed from the Industrial Revolution, and which are cited as historical justification for both unionism and socialism, no scholarly study more thoroughly revaluates the so-called "horrors of capitalism" than *Capitalism and the Historians,* edited by F. A. Hayek, University of Chicago Press, 1954.

It should be considered, further, that with all the efforts of both unions and management to improve the safety factor in conditions of work, *U.S. News and World Report* for February 20, 1959, called attention to this startling fact: in 1958, the best in the 23 years that the U.S. Labor Department has kept such records, 13,300 workers died of injuries at their work. Also, the lowest total of non-fatal injuries since 1939 still put 1,810,000 persons out of work for at least one day during 1958.

Such things came into existence as a result of the same business and industrial enterprise which a hundred years ago could not help being crude and uncouth because there was little else. Medicine was also primitive. So was much of science, education, government, and even religion. And if wages were poor, so was the entire economy! To reflect unfavorably upon the low wages and primitive working conditions of the last century because they were far below mid-twentieth-century standards is like scoffing at the scrubboard of grandmother's childhood because now she has a Bendix!

Saying that present-day union power is justified because of things that existed in the last century, and that to diminish that power will be to return to conditions as they were then, is to endow unions with a virtue akin to magic. It is to overlook the inventor, the investor, the researcher, the managerial genius, the system of free enterprice, and the initiative and industry of the laboring people themselves, for many of whose gifts to mankind the unions now claim the credit and the right to be custodians.

New Conditions, Outmoded Sympathies

But the most significant point to be made is that the depredations of business management belong largely to the past. The oppressions of the labor unions exist *now. Yet the sympathies which roused such commendable moral indignation against business abuses of the past are no longer forthcoming against the new predators who have taken their place.* Some of the very people who use such words as "reactionary" against those who deplore present-day union power are still thinking in terms of the realities of the nineteenth century! Professor Petro observes:

> "Businesses compete in a civilized way partly because the law compels them to do so and partly because the law's compulsion has created a selection process which grinds out the thugs and the lawless and advances the able and the industrious. Among trade unions, precisely the contrary process of selection has been going on, with, as might be expected, precisely the contrary results." (p. 214)

But even more, if *Faith and Freedom* and those who share our views are led to see less virtue in the union movement than in business and industry, including the farm industry, it is because, in the broad sense of all productive work, these and these alone — not unions and not government — create the wealth of a nation. The unions and the government can exist only as they have the backs of the producers, both laborers and managers, to ride upon.

The Interest is People

We cannot say this emphatically enough, for it is the key to answering the critics who insist that being critical of labor unions and friendly to business enterprise means being "a front for business interests." Our interest is in *people.* Insofar as labor unions can and do genuinely serve people, we will uphold them; insofar as business interests may hurt people, we will oppose them. The "bias" for which we have sometimes been taken to task by equally biased critics is on the side of the productive and creative forces of society and unalterably opposed to the unproductive, the parasitic, and the oppressive.

A hundred years ago it appeared that the oppressors were the employ-

ers because they were the first to emerge in relative prosperity and power in the struggle and scramble of a young nation wide open with freedom and opportunity. *Somebody* had to be first, and, by and large, the first were the best, if not always in the refined terms of Christian community and compassion, at least in terms of ingenuity, initiative, imagination, and courageous enterprise. Without them, and the freedom under which they flourished, there could have been *no* significant enterprise.

Nevertheless, enough of the nineteenth century entrepreneurs were sufficiently unscrupulous to rouse active concern. While all their wealth, evenly divided, would have added little to the income of individual workers, and none to the total wealth of society, they became the first targets of both the envious and the morally sensitive. While the reformers, whatever their motives, did not necessarily overlook the achievements of the entrepreneurs, they protested that the fruits of achievement be more widely dispersed.

The Changing Balance

And so the emphasis shifted from the production of wealth to the distribution of wealth, and the fact that without production there could be nothing to distribute was often forgotten. The producers having come to be regarded as villains, the distributors came to be hailed as heroes – the uncritically romanticised Robin Hoods of organized labor and "liberal" politics.

There may have been a period when business, organized labor, and government stood in an equilibrium, the power of business having been cut to the size of growing union and governmental power. But the point of equilibrium quickly passed. Where that point was, I would not presume to say, and it doesn't really matter. What matters is that within at least the past quarter century the balance has shifted.

Whatever case may be made for the claim that business and industry were oppressively dominant at the turn of the century, the dominance is now on the side of governmentally sponsored, privileged, and immunized unions. If once a number of industrialists were guilty of free-wheeling, "public-be-damned" *laissez faire*, it is now a large number of union leaders who fit this discredited prototype.

If once the business leaders used government for their special power and advantage, it is now the *union* leaders who so use government. And with government itself became so immensely stronger, more centralized, and unlimited, whatever segment of society has the government at its beck and call can but become the most powerful agency in the history of the nation!

Hence the Petro Book

It is this menacing power that Sylvester Petro exposes with all the drama of the McClellan Committee Hearings harnessed by the restraints and interpretive insight of a scholar in his remarkably timely and exciting book.

To call it "exciting" is not to exaggerate, for it selectively and coherently reproduces the drama of the McClellan Hearings with the authenticity of a documentary. Few men are able to do the job of studying the forty volumes of the recorded hearings, and fewer still, to distil their essence and their meaning.

Professor Petro does both, with the double perspective of a student of labor law who has been Professor of

aw at New York University since 950, and a man who has been actively ngaged in union activity as a worker nd organizer. Professor Perto largely nanced his way through college and aw school at the University of Chiago by working in Chicago steel mills nd construction crews. In the 1930's e took an active part in CIO organiational drives, and, after being admitted to the Illinois Bar, served four ears as editor of "Labor Law Reports." He does not write from an vory tower!

The Meaning of McClellan

He proceeds from the observable act that, while the McClellan Hearngs have shocked even union leaders with their revelations of corruption nd racketeering, neither these leaders, nor the general public, nor most of their legislative representatives nave understood their full and far-reaching implications. Professor Perto reduces the inchoate mass of evidence to order and meaning.

And the total evidence is enough to restore sight and new insight to even the blind! For the evidence is all there for any reader who is willing to face it – and if a reader does not wish to take either Petro's or my own word for it, he is referred to the original, unabridged sources in the forty volumes of the record itself. This is clear: *no one knows the labor union movement today who has not studied and inquired into the full meanings of the McClellan Hearings.*

What does Professor Petro find? In manageable and comprehensible categories he brings together the documentation, first, of how unwilling employees are organized "from the top" by stranger and racket picketing, secondary boycotts, "sweetheart" contracts, and "union shop" agreements. The verdict? "The national labor policy takes the position that employees have a right to unions of their own choosing; but unions insist upon the right to *employees* of their own choosing!" (p. 11)

He goes on to document the way in which violence and mass picketing turn "collective bargaining" into collective coercion; how mob action and the union *ethos* make an outlaw – Reuther's word is "enemy of progress," Mazey's word is "traitor," Burkart's, in an inflammatory speech during the Kohler strike, is "germ" – of every man, union or non-union, who dares to affront or resist union dictation; and how the lust for power on the part of union leaders, fortified by unprecedented instruments of power, reduces the union member to a new kind of serfdom.

Workers Still Underdogs

All the way through it is the working man who is Petro's chief concern. The morally sensitive who protested what they felt to be oppression of the "underdog" by business management must recognize that workers, not to speak of other segments of society, are no less oppressed because their new masters are union officials!

Have you wondered about the rightness and relevance of "the right to work" in this disturbing picture? Says Petro:

> "The servitude of union members rests upon two kinds of fear, the fear of violence and the fear of loss of their jobs. It is fear of one or the other alone that keeps them bound in a union when they know their officers are cheating and abusing them. Some would of course remain in the union regardless of their condition of servitude. That all – or even most – would stay is unbelievable. But there is an even

more important point: union officers would not be so highly tempted to abuse members who are free at any time simply to quit paying dues; and, still more important, thugs and racketeers would not find unions so attractive!" (p. 139)

Or again:

"There is a perfectly clear, logical, and rational relationship between control over a man's employment and exploitation of that man. He is in a weaker position to react against exploitation than he would be in the absence of such control. To deny that would be, not only to reject compelling logic; it would also be to blind onself to the plain facts of life. It would amount to saying that all the sorry disclosures in the McClellan Record either did not happen at all, or that they add up to nothing more than an incoherent jumble of unrelated events." (p. 143)

Union Mythology

One of the services of the Perto book is to dispel much of the mythology by which unions and their apologists continue to justify their power even in the face of the corruption that privileged, sanctuaried – one can almost say, sanctified – power inevitably breeds. Indeed, the author exposes a whole glossary of fallacies. The most widely current is that unions have had an important hand as a benevolent enterprise in raising the American standard of living. Whatever else the unions have accomplished, it is startling to most Americans to be informed that this claim is untenable:

"People have long taken it for granted that unions are entitled to the credit for the improvements we have known in the real wages of *all* workers. But this careless assumption can no longer be accepted. Careful thinking and extensive researches by the most competent economists in the nation have produced a contrary conclusion: that the big unions we know today are in fact the most viciously self-centered pressure groups in the country. . . .

"The unions do nothing for anyone but their own members; those members are but a small minority, less than one-fourth, of the working force; and . . . there is reason to doubt that they do something beneficial even for all their members. . . . When it comes to the question of the effect of union action on the real wages of *all* workers, the unanimous answer is that unions have not altered the pattern of income distribution which prevailed in the country before there were any unions to speak of. . . . Professor Milton Friedman of the University of Chicago . . . says that the effect of the most monopolistic and violent trade-union conduct has only been to exploit the defenseless members of society by redistributing income from the weaker to the stronger; . . . 'perhaps 10 per cent of the labor force has had its wages raised by some 15 per cent, implying that the remainder of the labor force had its wage rates reduced by some 1 to 4 percent'." (pp. 189-91)

Incredible? This is not the place to argue the case. To anyone who is incredulous, the only reply must be, "Read the book!" I repeat: no one can claim to understand present-day unionism and its implications for society who has not exposed himself to the documentation and interpretation provided in this volume! This remains true even for those who will disagree with Petro's theses.

The Emphasis is Moral

Just one more quotation to underscore the deeply moral orientation which motivates and summarizes Professor Petro's study and concern:

"We must bear in mind that moral and political corruption of the variety recounted here rot integrity at all levels and thus weaken the fibre of society, making it prone to further corruption of a million kinds in a million ways, every day. Nonunion men treated brutally as outlaws and union members as serfs, the infiltration of unions by professional gangsters, extortion from businessmen, bribery and corruption of public officials, the theory that trade unions are *entitled* to special privileges from government – no society can survive much of that for very long! . . ." (p. 277)

Yes, Professor Petro goes on to suggest rather specific remedies, but the first and necessary is a new understanding of what monopoly union power really means. Only as the conscience and consciousness of Americans are informed can they be aroused. And this is the book to do the informing and the rousing. It will apall you, probably anger you, and perhaps help you understand why Spiritual Mobilization must regard the present union problem as vastly more than just another in a congeries of concerns.

Friends and Critics

I have enjoyed receiving FAITH AND FREEDOM *for the past few years, and am becoming more concerned about the dangers to our way of life which you so aptly bring out. After four years of high school teaching I have seen many examples of increased desire for security and help from the government, at the expense of true liberty, and a seeming decline in spiritual values. Work of the type you are doing is definitely needed.*

Weston Cram
Fenton, Iowa

I dislike the design used on the cover – the floating timber and the shooting rocket. As a symbol it is ineffective; as art it is crude.

The Rev. Edward A. Lewis
Congregationalist
Durham, N. H.

EDITOR'S, NOTE: Too few comments either favorable or unfavorable have been received since inauguration of the new cover design. The Editor would welcome constructive suggestions from readers who feel that the cover can or should be improved. We remind readers, however, of the interpretation of the cover symbol presented with its first appearance last September.

I believe that a working fellowship of people who share the liberating spirit would be an important step forward. I have read FAITH AND FREEDOM *for many years, but realize that isolated magazine readers alone can never form the basis of a strong movement. A closer communion of kindred souls in local areas can be a very vital aspect of the spiritual revival so greatly needed in our civilization. As pastor of a small rural church, in addition to my teaching, I see in the personal contact and fellowship an essential element of the binding force which characterizes Christianity. If you would like to get a "pilot group" going in the Indianapolis area, I would be glad to get them together.*

Prof. Henry F. Williams
Franklin College
Franklin, Indiana

EDITOR'S NOTE: The foregoing is one of several hundred gratifying returns from our recent mailing exploring the possibilities of a more active fellowship of like-minded religious and educational leaders who are generally responsive to the goals and purposes of Spiritual Mobilization. A local fellowship such as Professor Williams suggests is certainly to be encouraged, and in coming months we shall work to expedite the fellowship on local, regional and national levels.

FAITH AND FREEDOM is published by Spiritual Mobilization, a national nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian organization founded in 1935. James C. Ingebretsen, President; the Rev. Edward W. Greenfield, Editorial and Program Director; C. C. Johnston, Business Manager.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: sent without charge to those who ask for it. If you wish to pay for your subscription, a $5 contribution covers a little more than cost; a contribution over $5 pays for subscriptions for libraries, clergymen, students and those not able to pay for their subscriptions.

EXTRA COPIES: 25c each up to ten; 20c each over ten. Introductory copies will be sent free to those you suggest. Should you suggest o or more, we would appreciate a contributi to cover the cost of mailing.

GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS: sent with an a propriate card telling the recipient of yo thoughtfulness. Just send us the names a addresses with an appropriate contributio

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: be sure to give yo complete former address (print or ty please).

Published by Spiritual Mobilization from to eight times a year, at Campbell House, P Box, 877, San Jacinto, California.

IN THIS ISSUE

You will find three significant announcements, together with timely and timeless discussions as follows:

The Second Sermon Awards Program . . . . p. 2

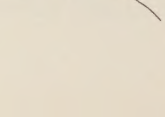
An Editorial Inquiry, "Who Are the Reactionaries?" . . p. 3

Three Human Interest Items:
"An American Family is Born" p. 7

"Dear Mary Lou" . . . . p. 10

"They Signed For Us" . . p. 12

An Editorial Book Review of First Importance:
"Power Unlimited" . . . p. 13



BOX 877
SAN JACINTO, CALIFORNIA

Form 3547 Requested

Mr. Charles Holbrook
Library- Pacific School of Religion
1798 Scenic Ave.
Berkeley, Calif.

29

PAID
San Jacinto, California
Permit No. 12